
# GAY STREET RE-OPENING

## Conceptual Design Report

# DRAFT

March 2007

BALTIMORE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

RK&K

OASIS DESIGN GROUP

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## APPENDICES

# I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In October 2006, the Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) selected Rummel, Klepper & Kahl, LLP (RK&K) to prepare this Conceptual Design Report for the reopening of Gay Street at Old Town Mall, between Mott Street and North Aisquith Street, to vehicular traffic. This site was chosen based on community desire to improve the street and reopen it to vehicular traffic. Old Town Mall has been a pedestrian mall since 1968 when the City converted it from a conventional street. Additionally, there is a parcel south of the project site that the BDC is working with a private developer to redevelop. The combination of community enthusiasm, adjacent private redevelopment potential, and the site's proximity to the already thriving downtown and waterfront districts make it an ideal site for City investment in street improvements.

RK&K and our urban design subconsultant, Oasis Design Group (Oasis) have implemented a process for this concept design which included determining existing conditions, gathering community input, drafting preliminary layout options for community and city comment, determining the preferred layout option, preparing a cost estimate, and preparing this Conceptual Design Report to document the design process.

The preferred option chosen as a result of the conceptual design process is a layout that provides two-way traffic flow through the site and alternates parallel parking from one side of the street to the other using a technique known as a chicane. The chicane will also provide traffic calming for this commercial district where heavy pedestrian traffic is anticipated.

This report outlines the design process, constraints, and considerations that contributed to the selection of the preferred option and cost estimate, as well as provides figures that document the evolution of the design.

# II. BACKGROUND

## HISTORY

The Gay Street Commercial Corridor (now Old Town Mall) has a rich and extensive history that dates back more than 200 years. Throughout its history it has been home to numerous ethnic groups and has served residential, commercial, spiritual, and industrial functions. Its location at the convergence of three main cross roads made the area a prime location for commerce. Old Town Mall was built up with significant brick commercial structures around 1823 and by 1936 "solid unbroken rows of brick buildings lined the 500 block of Gay Street." In 1968, Old Town Mall was closed to vehicular traffic to create a pedestrian mall which was a popular design concept at the time. In 2004, portions of the Old Town Mall were designated as an official Baltimore City Historic District. Today the roadway is still closed and the pedestrian mall remains, but there is growing momentum to open the roadway in an effort to restore economic vitality to the area. Development opportunities are being explored on parcels south of the historic district. Reopening the historic section of Old Town Mall to vehicular traffic is the focus of this report and is described in the sections that follow.

## EXISTING CONDITONS

The project area includes the 500 block of Old Town Mall, which is located between Mott Street and North Aisquith Street (Refer to Figure 2). This site was selected because many merchants and property owners have expressed interest in reopening Old Town Mall to vehicular traffic in order to make it safe and convenient for customers to patronize the businesses of Old Town Mall.

Old Town Mall is oriented such that the facades along the Mall frame a view of the downtown financial district and City Hall. This view creates a strong feeling of connection to the urban environment and is important to preserve.

Because of the age and historic nature of the corridor, the available width between building faces is approximately 48 feet, which is less than a typical commercial district. This has a direct impact on the layout options available for converting Old Town Mall into a vehicular street.

View Corridor along Old Town Mall

Utilities along Old Town Mall are underground and include sanitary sewer, storm drain, electrical, gas, telecom, and water. Available record data shows that these utility systems were installed during the time period ranging from 1900 to the 1930s. The existing street cross-section has no curbs and drains to the center, similar to many alley cross-sections (Refer to Figure 4). Most of the utility record drawings obtained for this area were created prior to the re-naming of this portion Gay Street as Old Town Mall and refer to the project site as Gay Street. However, since the street is currently known as Old Town Mall, it will be referred to as such in this report.

The points of connection from Old Town Mall to other streets include North Aisquith Street, Mott Street, and Orleans Street via Forrest Street.

The area to the south of this project area is slated for redevelopment (Refer to Figure 1). The BDC is currently working with a developer for this project. To amass an area sufficient for development, some future street closures have been planned, including Forrest Street. The main points of connection for Old Town Mall after this planned redevelopment would be North Aisquith Street, Mott Street, and access from the development itself.

## REVITALIZATON

The revitalization of Old Town Mall and the reopening of the street to vehicular traffic are efforts to spark economic development and restore vitality to this once thriving commercial district. On a basic level the plans intend to replace infrastructure and elements such as crumbling sidewalks and pavement, broken or non-functioning light fixtures, utilities, and inoperable fountains. New lighting would enhance safety and security in the area and create a more enticing environment for shoppers. Opening the roadway and adding parking would increase pedestrian and vehicular traffic, which adds to the commercial viability of the street and contributes to increased safety and security.

On another level, the reopening of Old Town Mall would provide the impetus for public investment and it is hoped that a sense of civic pride would spur private investment from local merchants and property owners. Old Town Mall has the benefit of a location with close proximity to downtown, Johns Hopkins Medical Campus, and bustling waterfront neighborhoods, which also would make it attractive to investors. Together, the reopening plans for Old Town Mall and the redevelopment plans for the area south of the project represent significant investments in this area and a commitment to revitalizing the neighborhood by the City of Baltimore and the BDC.

Damaged Bollards on Old Town Mall

# III. PROCESS

In October 2006, the BDC requested proposals to prepare a preliminary, conceptual design for the reopening of Old Town Mall. The design team of RK&K and Oasis was selected for this project. The project was divided into seven tasks as follows:

- *Task I, Data Gathering*: This task included a Kick-off meeting with BDC, preparation of a basemap using available record drawings obtained from the City and private utility companies, and the first of three stakeholder meetings. This first stakeholder meeting focused on the ideas and concerns of the stakeholders, including pedestrian and vehicular circulation, parking for business patrons, loading access for businesses, safety, appearance, and Old Town Mall's connection to nearby streets and future development. At the conclusion of Task I, RK&K and Oasis prepared a summary memorandum.

- *Task II, Develop Preliminary Alternatives*: During Task II, the design team developed five preliminary concepts for presentation at the second stakeholder meeting, listed as follows:

    - Option 1: One-way traffic, parallel parking on one side (Refer to Figure 5)
    - Option 2: One-way traffic, parallel parking on both sides (Refer to Figure 6)
    - Option 3: Two-way traffic, parallel parking on alternating sides (Refer to Figure 7)
    - Option 4: One-way traffic, 30º angled parking on one side (Refer to Figure 8)
    - Option 5: Two-way traffic, parallel parking on one side (Refer to Figure 9)

    Stakeholder Meeting #2 was held and these five options were presented and characteristics of each were discussed (Refer to Figure 10). Feedback from stakeholders was solicited and based on this feedback, two preferred alternatives were selected: Option 1: One-way traffic, parallel parking on one side (Refer to Figure 5) and Option 3: Two-way traffic, parallel parking on alternating sides (Refer to Figure 7). RK&K and Oasis prepared a summary memorandum to document this task.

- *Task III, Refine and Evaluate Alternatives*: The two preferred alternatives were further refined during Task III and renamed as Option A: Two-way traffic, parallel parking on alternating sides (Refer to Figure 12) and Option B: One-way traffic, parallel parking on one side (Refer to Figure 13). A rendering of proposed streetscape surface treatments was created for presentation to the community (Refer to Figure 11). A preliminary, order of magnitude cost estimate was prepared for each alternative and BDC reviewed these preliminary costs. There was negligible cost difference between the two alternatives (Refer to Appendices IA and IB).

- *Task IV, Preferred Alternative*: Task IV included the final stakeholder meeting, during which the stakeholders indicated their favored alternative, based on their preferences (Refer to Figure 12). After this selection, the design team prepared a summary memorandum.

- *Task V, Final Preferred Alternative*: RK&K and Oasis further refined the chosen alternative and prepared an image board showing recommended streetscape amenities for the project (Refer to Figure 12).

- *Task VI, Final Cost Estimate*: The design team prepared a final cost estimate for the preferred alternative. (Refer to Appendix II)

- *Task VII, Final Report*: During this task, RK&K and Oasis prepared this Final Report for the conceptual design of the reopening of Old Town Mall to vehicular traffic.

## PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The alternative selected by the design team and the stakeholders for further analysis is an option that provides two-way traffic and parallel parking (Refer to Figure 11). The design alternates parallel parking from one side of the street to the other, creating a serpentine flow of traffic along the street, technically referred to as a chicane. This design also serves to calm traffic, regulates speed, and discourages the use of the street as a shortcut.

# IV. DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS AND CONCEPTS

The design and planning process for the reopening of Gay Street was guided by community input, existing conditions, budget considerations, safety, and aesthetics. Outlined below are the primary elements that influenced the preferred street alignment and subsequent design recommendations.

## UTILITIES

Utilities along Old Town Mall are located underground and include sanitary sewer, storm drain, electrical, gas, telecom, and water. The information included on the Utility and Existing Conditions Plan (Figure 4) was gathered from available utility record drawings and visual observation; no detailed field investigation or surveys were performed.

The following list outlines the utility information gathered from record drawings:

- An 8" sanitary sewer line runs in Old Town Mall that serves buildings on both sides of the street. The 10" sanitary sewer line in Mott Street connects into the Old Town Mall sewer. The Old Town Mall line increases to a 10" line south of Mott Street.
- A 15" storm drain flows southwest along the Mall into a 21" storm drain that continues off-site onto Mott Street. Old Town Mall has no curbs and is graded to drain to the center of the street, when viewed in section (Refer to Figure 3). There are approximately four storm drain inlets along the Mall, which are connected to the storm drain line. There is also a 6" clearwater drainage system that receives condensation drains/ floor drains and roof drainage from the buildings along the Mall and connects to the storm drain system at the intersection of Old Town Mall and Mott Street.
- The City-owned conduit systems that run along Old Town Mall carry electrical power, street lighting, traffic signalization, and fiber optic systems. Customers along Old Town Mall are connected into the City conduit system via distribution manholes. There are also two transformer vaults at the northeast end of the Mall.
- An 8" low pressure cast iron gas line (BGE) installed in 1930 runs along Old Town Mall and serves both sides of the street.
- The telecom conduits in Old Town Mall were installed circa 1907. The clay tile conduits are used as a distribution line to provide service cables to Old Town Mall, Flat Iron Alley and McElderry Street.
- A 10" cast iron water line provides metered domestic and fire water to the buildings on both sides of Old Town Mall.

Based on available record data, it is believed that these utility systems were installed in the time period ranging from 1900 to the 1930s and are suspected to be near the end of their lifecycle. For the next phase of design, a detailed utility analysis and survey is recommended to determine utility condition and exact utility locations and sizes. However, at this point in design, it is assumed that the reconstruction of all utility systems is necessary and this is reflected in the cost estimate.

## ROADWAY

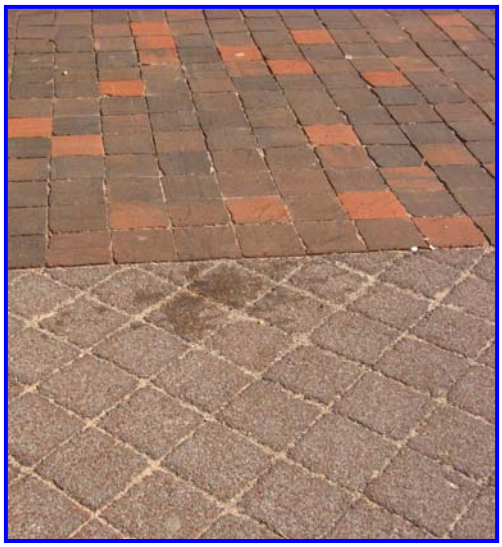
### Cross-section

The existing width of from building face to building face on Old Town Mall is approximately 48 feet. When viewed in cross-section (Refer to Figure 3), there are no curbs present, and the grade slopes to a low point at the center of the street, similar to many alley cross-sections. The design team proposes

installation of a traditional curb that will separate pedestrian sidewalks from vehicular travel and parking areas (Refer to Figure 14). This would be achieved by removal of approximately 18 inches of soil prior to roadway construction in the vehicular areas so that the grade of the sidewalks would remain unchanged and still be compatible with storefront entrances. The storm drain inlets would remain in the center of the street and the pavement would slope toward them. This would be a more economical design because fewer inlets would be necessary, and would function adequately because of the narrow width between buildings and associated limited drainage area. Though utilities are located in the area that is to be excavated, only 6 inches of soil must be removed to accommodate the proposed curbs and the design provides for replacement of existing utilities. Using a curb between pedestrian sidewalks and vehicular areas is the most economical and effective way to construct and maintain separation of pedestrians and vehicles.

### Surface Treatment

The current Old Town Mall surface material is 8" x 8" red clay pavers and hexagonal asphalt pavers that were installed when the mall was closed to vehicular traffic in 1968. The existing materials would not be able to be salvaged given their condition and the excavation needed to establish curbs and replace underground utilities. The design team recommends that these pavers be removed with the reestablishment of the vehicular roadway and a new asphalt surface treatment be installed for the vehicular portion of the street. Concrete curbs and gutters with brick sidewalks would complete the adjacent walkway treatments. A concrete band separating the recessed parallel parking from the roadway would provide visual distinction between parking spaces and the edge of the roadway (Refer to Figure 15). These treatments provide an economical, pedestrian-friendly, and aesthetically appealing streetscape treatment and would visually indicate that the street is once again open to vehicular traffic.



Existing Pavers To Be Replaced

## TRAFFIC

Presently, Old Town Mall is closed to through traffic. However, many vehicles use the Mall to access shops. Because there is no traffic regulation on the Mall, this presents a hazard to pedestrians. After considering input from community stakeholders, the City, and design team members, a two-way traffic pattern was chosen for Old Town Mall.

The following list outlines community stakeholders' opinions and concerns about traffic:

- A two-way traffic scheme is preferred to allow northeast-bound and southwest-bound traffic flow with the potential to increase patronage of businesses.
- Speed should be regulated on Old Town Mall for safety and so that passers-by can see shops they may want to patronize.
- Old Town Mall should not be used as a shortcut for northeast-bound traffic from downtown.
- An increased volume on Mott Street from drivers accessing Old Town Mall may increase traffic problems for Stirling Street residents accessing their street.

The selected alternative addresses design team and community traffic concerns. The chicane layout functions as a traffic calming device that would regulate speed and discourage the use of Old Town Mall as a shortcut for commuters.

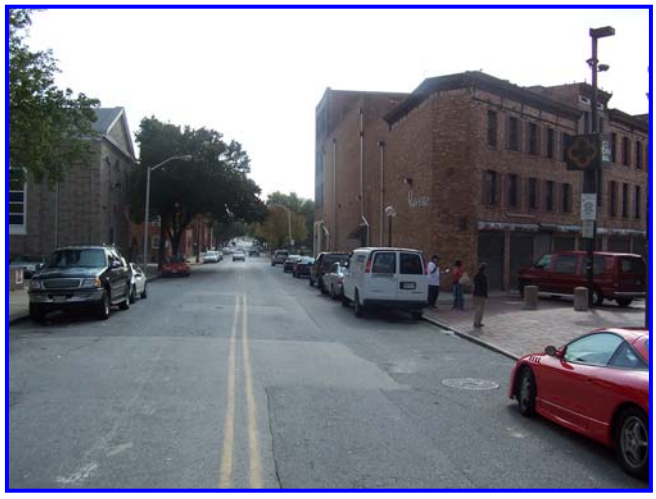
Access to Old Town Mall from the southeast should be encouraged to decrease the potential for traffic

on Mott Street. From Orleans Street, the Mall can be accessed via Forrest Street. To facilitate this traffic pattern, the curb at the intersection of Forrest Street and Old Town Mall should be removed to allow vehicles to access the Mall. Additionally, a left turn signal for eastbound traffic on Orleans Street added to the existing traffic signal would encourage use of this route. This access route to Old Town Mall would be temporary if the parcel to the south of the Mall is redeveloped.

Turning movements at the north and south ends of Old Town Mall were analyzed using the AASHTO SU vehicle (Refer to insets on Figures 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13). At the south end of the Mall, it is anticipated that the street will be widened to 22 feet (two 11 feet wide lanes). Because the turning maneuver for the SU vehicle crosses the centerline at the Mott Street – Old Town Mall intersection, stop signs should be placed at this intersection that would allow for the SU turning maneuver before another vehicle enters the intersection. At the north end of the Mall, there exists the same problem of the SU vehicle crossing the centerline of North Aisquith Street when it executes the right turn from Old Town Mall onto North Aisquith Street southbound. This is due to the existing narrow lanes and street parking on North Aisquith Street. Elimination of some street parking on the west side of North Aisquith Street and placement of a stop sign for northbound traffic on North Aisquith would help the function of this intersection. However, placement of the stop sign for northbound traffic on North Aisquith must be visible to vehicles turning onto North Aisquith from the Mall; this is a consideration because of the location of buildings on the south side of the Mall and the skew of the intersection.

Forrest Street as it intersects Old Town Mall

Sight distance is limited at the intersection of Old Town Mall and North Aisquith Street for northeast-bound vehicles on the Mall. This is caused by the skew of this intersection and existing buildings. To alleviate part of this problem, the existing street parking on North Aisquith Street should be modified. Parking should be prohibited on the west side of North Aisquith Street between the Mall and East Monument Street. Parking should be eliminated on the west side of North Aisquith Street for a distance of approximately 50 feet south of Old Town Mall. It is not possible to achieve AASHTO required sight distances (without intersection control) south of the Mall due to the location of the buildings on the south side of the Mall and the skew of the intersection. If a stop sign were located at this intersection for northbound traffic on North Aisquith Street, it would help alleviate this problem. A stop sign would probably not be preferable for southbound traffic on North Aisquith Street because of the intersection's proximity to East Monument Street and the potential for queuing to extend onto East Monument Street. Existing traffic volumes and patterns at this intersection should be analyzed as a part of the next phase of design.



Skewed Intersection at Old Town Mall and North Aisquith Street

## PARKING

Currently, vehicles park on Old Town Mall, and because it is not organized or regulated, this presents a hazard to pedestrians and blocks storefronts. The proposed chicane layout selected for the reopening of Old Town Mall shows parallel parking on alternating sides of the street (Refer to Figure 12).

Community stakeholders' voiced their opinions and concerns about parking and wanted the new design to:

- Provide an adequate number of parking spaces for Old Town Mall shops at no cost to customers – parking meters are not desired;
- Ensure that parking spaces would not be occupied by the same vehicle for an extended time period;
- Include loading access to stores that do not have rear loading access;
- Have convenient parking for Mall patrons;
- Make sure that parking would not be so dense along the Mall that it appears congested and/or poses a safety/security risk to shop owners or patrons; and
- Discourage parking on nearby Stirling Street.

Currently, vehicles park on the pedestrian mall

The proposed two-way scheme with parking on alternating sides of the street addresses design team and community parking concerns.

The narrow (approximate 48') width between building faces on the Mall is a major constraint for the proposed street design. To encourage pedestrian use of the Mall, the design team favored maintaining an 8 feet sidewalk width on each side of the street. The narrow width of the Mall cannot accommodate two lanes of traffic, parallel parking on both sides, and desired sidewalk widths. The 20 feet required width of a fire access lane on Old Town Mall would only leave room for parallel parking on one side, as well. Width is not adequate for an angled parking scheme that provides more parking spaces than parallel parking. The preferred option, Option A (Refer to Figure 12) provides 20 parking spaces on the Mall, which is only slightly fewer than the 23 provided with Option B (Refer to Figure 13).

The chicane layout provides parallel parking that is accessible to both directions of traffic. The layout provides approximately the same number of parking spaces as the one-way option (Refer to Figure 13) with parallel parking on one side because the one-way scheme shows breaks in the parking to allow for pedestrian crossing points and other amenities such as benches. At the northeast end of Old Town Mall, where businesses do not have loading access in the rear, there are four parking spaces that would be time-restricted to allow for loading during specified hours. The proposed design provides a parking layout that will allow parking for customers near shops and preserve vehicle travel lanes and the pedestrian environment.

## PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENTS

Throughout the planning and design process for the reopening of Gay Street the pedestrian environments were a constant consideration. The design team recognized that transforming the

pedestrian mall into a vehicular street would represent a fundamental shift in the way that pedestrians use and interact with the street. The shift from a dedicated pedestrian mall to a traditional street introduces vehicular traffic and parking in areas where pedestrians currently move about freely. To some degree, pedestrians and vehicles already share the space since local merchants and customers currently drive and park on the Mall. However, the existing conditions limit traffic flow and speed, which increases safety for pedestrians.

The design approach for the reopening of Gay Street focuses on two main goals with respect to the pedestrian environment: creating a safe and accessible environment for pedestrians and vehicles, and creating a comfortable, enjoyable, and aesthetically pleasing pedestrian environment.

## PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

The existing conditions on Old Town Mall allow pedestrians to move freely through the space and from one side of the Mall to the other. Concrete bollards exist to provide some distinction between a meandering service access lane and purely pedestrian areas, but many of the bollards are in disrepair or have been removed. Presently, there are no curbs or grade changes to provide physical separation between pedestrian and vehicle zones within Old Town Mall. Providing separation of pedestrians and vehicles is a key safety consideration.

Several approaches were considered to obtain separation of pedestrians and vehicles. One design approach considered using bollards along the sidewalk edges instead of traditional curbs. This approach was a response to the current road profile, which does not have curbs and slopes to the center for drainage. Using bollards to distinguish at-grade pedestrian walks from vehicular travel lanes would provide physical separation while allowing the current drainage scheme to remain unchanged. Given the uncertainty of underground utility locations and depths in the roadway and the down cutting required to lower the roadway enough for curbs, this approach provided an attractive, albeit unconventional solution. However, this option was not chosen due to quantity of bollards required, maintenance of bollards required, and the bollards' encroachment on provided sidewalk widths.

The preferred method for establishing a safe pedestrian environment is to provide a traditional curb and gutter at the sidewalk/roadway interface. This would provide a 6 inch elevation difference between the sidewalk and roadway. As mentioned above, this approach requires lowering the existing grade of the Mall to provide for proper drainage of the roadway, but would require less long term maintenance than a bollard system.

### Sidewalk Size

The narrow width (approximately 48') from building face to building face, combined with the roadway alignments and parking configurations considered during the design process, had varying implications on the sidewalk width and character (Refer to Figure 10). Given the commercial character of the street and the potential for large numbers of pedestrians, ADA requirements, and space requirements for site furnishings and lighting, the goal was to create the widest possible sidewalk width while balancing the need for parking and vehicular travel. Option #1, (one-way street with parking on one side, Refer to Figure 5) would create the most favorable sidewalks (10'-6" wide) with sufficient parking, but the one-way traffic flow was less favorable to community stakeholders. Option #2, (one-way street with parallel parking on both sides, Refer to Figure 6) would create a generous amount of parking, but the sidewalk width shrinks to 6'-6". Option #3, (two-way traffic with parallel alternating sides, Refer to Figure 7) would provide adequate parking and sidewalk widths of 8'-6". Option #4 (one-way traffic with angled parking, Refer to Figure 8) would provide average parking, but the sidewalks shrank to an unacceptable 5'-6" width. Based on the expressed goals for pedestrians, parking, and vehicular flow, Option #3 and Option #1 would produce the most favorable balance without compromising pedestrian safety or

comfort. These were renamed as Option A (Refer to Figure 12) and Option B (Refer to Figure 13), respectively, for the next step of the conceptual design process. Option B was the preferred alternative and also has an added traffic calming measure due to the serpentine layout of the street.

### Street Width—Curb Extensions

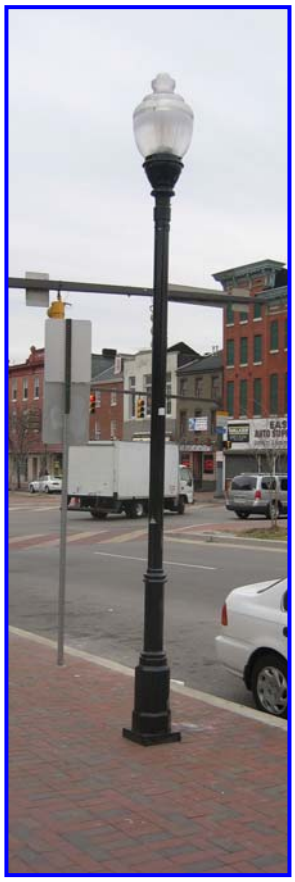
With a length of nearly 700 feet, the 500 block of Old Town Mall is relatively long. The design team expects that pedestrians may choose to cross at mid-block as well as at the corner crosswalks. The chicane layout of the street provides the opportunity to create signed midblock crosswalks at the curb extensions (Refer to Figure 12) where pedestrians may safely cross the street. Pedestrians crossing at the curb extensions would not be obscured by parked cars and would be visible to drivers. A contrasting brick paving at midblock crosswalks would also alert drivers to expect pedestrians. Additionally, the curb extensions provide space suitable for handicap ramps.

### Lighting

Street lighting is an ongoing concern for merchants and customers on Old Town Mall from a safety, functionality, and aesthetic perspective. Currently, many of the fixtures are in disrepair and do not work consistently. Maintaining an acceptable level of light to provide security was an important design consideration.

The design team did not want to constrain light pole placement to curb extensions or to have the poles create pinch points along the sidewalk. Options A and B would allow for the placement of light posts anywhere along the length of the street, comply with ADA accessibility standards, and meet standard roadway clear zone setback requirements while providing acceptable walking space.

In addition to lighting placement, the team also considered the aesthetics of the street light fixtures. Initial discussions about lighting fixtures focused on the distribution of light poles and the desire to have smaller, pedestrian scale fixtures spaced closely together rather than larger, taller fixtures at wider intervals. Input from the City of Baltimore Department of Transportation indicated that standard fixtures would be readily maintained by the City and could be chosen to fit with the historic character of the district. The design team recommends selecting the standard decorative Victorian Luminaire on the Homeland Pole as used on adjacent streets (Refer to Figure 15). This would facilitate prompt repair of any non-functioning streetlights.



Victorian Luminaire on Homeland Pole

Security lighting for the alleyways parallel to Gay Street should also be considered as part of the reopening of Old Town Mall. Providing secure alleyways would help ensure that merchants and employees feel safe using the alleys to access nearby parking behind their stores and do not occupy the limited on-street spaces, which are intended for customers.

### Security Cameras

Community stakeholders expressed an interest in installing security cameras along the length of Old Town Mall to enhance security. The placement of cameras is expected to improve safety, discourage petty crime, and create a more hospitable environment for customers, merchants, and residents. In many areas, the City uses pole-mounted security cameras accompanied by a flashing blue light. Community stakeholders fear that these flashing blue light cameras would cause people to perceive Old Town Mall as an area with serious criminal activity and could discourage customers. The design team recommends that either no blue light is mounted with the camera or a solid blue light is used

instead. The feasibility of using cameras in the alleys paralleling Gay Street may want to be explored as well. Merchants expressed security concerns about parking behind their stores and using back door entrances to their buildings. It is important to create an environment on the Mall and its adjacent streets that is safe for merchants, residents, and customers alike.

## PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES

The design team sought to create a comfortable and aesthetically pleasing pedestrian environment. A number of elements, including special paving, plantings, site furnishing, and sidewalk space were considered during the design process. The character of the existing structures, street width, and general character of the site, combined with the interests and concerns of the stakeholders guided design decisions for specific materials chosen for the pedestrian environment.

### Paving Materials

A number of alternative paving layouts were considered using combinations of brick pavers and concrete. One alternative used concrete walks with brick accents while a second alternative used brick walks with concrete accents. The second alternative proved to be the preferred option for several reasons. First, as described above, the brick sidewalks blend with the historic character and enhance the feel of the commercial district. Additionally, the building setbacks vary from building to building creating an uneven edge condition along the building facades. Using brick for the sidewalks and a band of concrete at the building facade allows for a clean interface between the building and sidewalks.

The selection of sidewalk paving materials focused on materials that would blend with the historic character of the buildings along the street, identify the area as a commercial shopping district, and that would visually unify the section of the street. A blend of 4” x 8” red clay pavers is recommended (Refer to Figure 15). Aesthetically, these pavers complement the architecture of Old Town Mall and would help to distinguish the area as one of Baltimore’s commercial districts. Other commercial districts in Baltimore such as Fells Point, Charles Street, Lexington Street, and Charles Village have undergone streetscape renovations using brick pavers with much success while still keeping in character with the historic character of these sites.

### Plantings

The suggestion of plantings (both street trees and container plantings) along Gay Street raised a number of concerns. First, given the limited width of Old Town Mall from facade to facade and the desire for parking, the use of street trees is difficult. While street trees would certainly enhance the character of Gay Street there is simply not sufficient space to grow healthy trees while meeting the requirements for pedestrians and parking. Other plantings, including container plantings were suggested, but stakeholders were hesitant due to concerns about pests and long-term care and maintenance.

### Site Furnishing

As previously mentioned the width of Old Town Mall is very narrow and every effort was made to make the sidewalks as wide as possible and keep them free from obstacles. The placement of site furniture on the sidewalk, such as benches, bike racks, and litter receptacles is limited given the sidewalk width and the desire for the widest possible walking surface. The design for the street includes several curb extensions where the roadway narrows and the sidewalks expand. These areas, together with the street corners provide the best opportunities for placing site furniture where it would not impede pedestrian movement. While specific fixtures have not been selected at this stage the design team recommends high quality steel construction benches and trash cans that match the historic character of the street and that are durable and low maintenance. Figure 15 depicts fixtures that would be appropriate for Gay Street

# V. COST ESTIMATE

The design team has prepared a cost estimate for the reopening of Old Town Mall to vehicular traffic (Refer to Appendix II). This cost estimate, which should be utilized for budgetary purposes, identifies construction costs for demolition, replacement of utilities, curb installation, surface treatments, site furnishings, and lighting. The cost of installation of new service by BGE and Verizon is not included, though ductbanks associated with these services are included in the estimate. These costs should be identified by the utility owners as design proceeds in the next phase of the project. Though it is a large portion of the cost associated with this estimate, the replacement of the utility systems on Old Town Mall would help ensure their continued operation and would avoid the need to disrupt the new streetscape for future repairs to the aging utility systems. The estimate totals approximately $8.4M, including contingencies and escalation to FY2009.

# VI. CONCLUSION

The conceptual design process has resulted in a proposed design that is preferred by community stakeholders and recommended by the design team. The two-way traffic flow would be calmed by the chicane layout design, a comfortable pedestrian environment would be provided, and parking would be available for customers to access the shops on Old Town Mall. The Mall would be enhanced by surface treatments on the sidewalks that keep with the historic context of the neighborhood, updated street lighting, and reconstructed utility systems that would help ensure problem-free operation well into the future. It is hoped that the reopening of Old Town Mall to vehicular traffic and the streetscape efforts are major contributors to revitalization, which in turn spark more private investment in the area. Community stakeholders are enthusiastic about the area and this, combined with the site's proximity to downtown, the Johns Hopkins Medical Campus, and bustling waterfront neighborhoods, make it a suitable candidate for City investment.

# VI. APPENDICES

## FIGURES



## APPENDICES